

**Statement**  
**Of**  
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**Terrorism**  
  
**Before**  
**the**  
**Subcommittee**  
**on**  
**Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
  
**United States House of Representatives**

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, my name is Dennis Reimer and I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I am Director of the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) in Oklahoma City, a position I have held for almost five years. Prior to becoming Director of MIPT I served 37 years in the United States Army.

MIPT has worked diligently for the past five years to try to prevent acts of terrorism or mitigate their effects. We are located at the site of the largest domestic terrorism attack in U.S. history, but September 11<sup>th</sup> made it clear that the line between domestic and international terrorism is hard to draw. Today we must defend against terrorist threats of any origin.

Since our inception our focus has been on improving preparedness of the first responder community across the nation. We are extremely grateful to Congress for supporting us through four separate appropriations. That support has made America's first responders better prepared to defend us against terrorism. Initially our awards were made through the Department of Justice but the Department of Homeland Security has administered our awards since it was created. Additionally, we have received small discretionary awards from DHS.

Our primary effort initially was to sponsor research to create the technology and equipment first responders need to deal with terrorism. We drew up our first research agenda based on discussions with representatives of the first responder community and

representatives of the research community. We attempted to close the gaps between what was needed and what was already being done. I think we were very successful.

Well before 9/11 we were working on over 30 research projects, including:

- a new treatment for anthrax;
- more sensitive chemical and explosive detection systems;
- a national technology plan for emergency response to catastrophic terrorism that focuses on technology investments to improve capabilities within twelve National Terrorism Response Objectives (NTRROs) that cover the anticipated scope of first responders' requirements for dealing with chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological and explosive/incendiary attacks on the homeland (Project Responder);
- a system to kill biological pathogens in heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems;
- a system to collect and disseminate best practices and lessons learned throughout the emergency response community (Lessons Learned Information Sharing); and
- an unclassified, comprehensive knowledge base of terrorist organizations and their leaders, terrorist incidents, and indictments and prosecutions of terrorists within the U.S. (Terrorism Knowledge Base).

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. These projects have made a huge difference in the way the first responder community is able to conduct its business.

While the initial efforts of MIPT were heavily weighted towards research programs, we have gradually shifted to doing more in the area of knowledge management—the collection and distribution of what we know about terrorism and how to respond to it. Our three flagship programs – Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS), the Responder Knowledge Base (RKB), and the Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB) have been widely accepted by the first responder community.

- LLIS allows first responders to share best practices and lessons learned with other members of the community. The cornerstone of LLIS involves expert analysis of the After Action Reports from the Murrah Building bombing, 9/11 and hundreds of counterterrorism exercises. Approved registration is required because this knowledge base contains sensitive but unclassified information. Battalion Chief Mike Puzziferri of the Fire Department of New York said of LLIS: “LLIS.gov is phenomenal. I wish we had something like this a long time ago.”
- The Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) provides first responders with information concerning what equipment is available; whether the equipment has been tested, and if so to what standard; what training is needed to operate that equipment; how they can pay for it and who else is using it. This is an open system. Mike Lucey of the National Technology Transfer Center described the RKB as “a critical resource for [responders] because they need to know what technology is out there and what works. Their lives depend on it.”

- The Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB) presents over 35 years of international terrorism information and five years of domestic terrorism information plus over 20 years of information on the legal aspects of terrorism cases in the U.S. This database is unclassified and available to first responders, analysts, researchers and the public worldwide. As Heritage Foundation homeland security expert James Carafano of the Heritage Foundation said of the TKB, “The information is very credible, very fresh and authoritative. It’s the most comprehensive [terrorism website] I have seen and the most user-friendly.”

The topic of this hearing “Enhancing Terrorism Preparedness for First Responders” is one of the most critical issues our nation faces. In order to enhance terrorism preparedness for first responders, we must have a national system built upon a strong partnership amongst Federal, State and local levels of government. Further, with approximately 85% of the Nation’s infrastructure controlled by the private sector, such a system must facilitate cooperation between the private and public sectors to be effective. This national system will require unprecedented information sharing amongst stakeholders. This is not as much a technical challenge as it is a cultural change. Such a system does not currently exist, but I believe it is within our grasp.

This system must flow from the National Strategy for Homeland Security issued in July 2002. This strategy will ultimately determine the national capabilities that we will require at the Federal, State and local levels of government in order to combat terrorism on U.S. soil. These capabilities can then be used to define the actual requirements for

personnel, equipment and training for first responders. It is important to remember that we are not starting with a clean sheet of paper – initiatives have been taken and others are underway that will allow the nation to achieve such a system. We should leverage those initiatives.

The National Preparedness System must incorporate the guidance issued in Homeland Security Presidential Directives 5, 7 and 8. The National System must build on already agreed upon initiatives such as the National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System that have been developed by representatives of all levels of government. Stakeholders know that the NRP defines what needs to be done in order to manage a major incident, whether manmade or natural, and NIMS generally defines how it needs to be done. Accepting these two tools as standard operating procedures will move us a long way towards a National System.

It must be recognized, however, that we have more work to do in areas such as achieving national standards, a coordinated national operational framework and common doctrine. All of these elements are important to a National System but they can take time to develop and implement. We need to do it as quickly as we can but to force the issue and set artificial, short deadlines for the development and implementation of these elements, I think would be a serious mistake. We must get it right.

I believe we must build a National System through a bottom up approach but that approach must be consistent with top down guidance that provides the operational

framework for such a system. Such an approach recognizes the uniqueness of state and local entities and the fact that “one size does not fit all”, but also ensures that there is sufficient commonality to effect mutual coordination and cooperation. Such a system should also manage risk by defining that risk, prioritizing it and allocating resources to get the greatest return on investment.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 required the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to develop a National Domestic All-Hazards Preparedness Goal in coordination with the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies and in consultation with State, local and tribal governments. This effort will be a critical link in the National System. This National Goal should identify national priorities and associate performance objectives and measures with those priorities.

While we have considerable experience with responding to natural disasters, we have limited experience – albeit tragic – in preventing and responding to manmade disasters. We must build upon the all-hazards experience gained from response to natural and manmade disasters and attempt to better define the threat we face from terrorism. One way to accomplish this is by developing a series of Illustrative Planning Scenarios. These scenarios can help identify what capabilities the nation needs to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from manmade or natural disasters. Illustrative Planning Scenarios are not intended to predict future attacks, but rather serve as a planning tool that provides first responders an indication of the kind of events for which they must be prepared. Achieving the capabilities required to prevent these events from occurring or

to mitigate the damage caused by these events will require specific actions at each level of government. Not all capabilities require specific action by each level of government, but there must be a coordinated, coherent approach involving all levels of government for all capabilities.

Describing the national capabilities helps first responders determine the requirement for personnel, equipment and training at each level of government. Once desired national capabilities are described, first responders can determine whether they have the means to accomplish their mission. If they do not then a gap exists in the National Preparedness System. Gaps can be quantified and, resources allocated to plug those gaps or operational concepts adjusted to mitigate the effect of those gaps. Developing national priorities is a complex task based on managing risk through threat identification and vulnerability analysis.

States continue to have the primary responsibility for protecting the citizens of their state. State strategies initially completed in December 2003 will most likely have to be adjusted to reflect the assessment of how their state operational framework for preventing and mitigating the damage associated with the multi-disciplinary, all-hazards approach to disasters fits into the National Preparedness System. The best way to conduct this assessment is to assess the ability of a state and its municipalities to fulfill their roles and responsibilities associated with the identified national capabilities necessary to deal with these threats. Such assessments will determine personnel, equipment and training requirements across the state in addition to what is needed for day to day requirements if



appropriate. Where excess capability is identified in these assessments, that capability can help offset gaps that might exist in other parts of the state. Under the most likely situation where gaps exist, mutual aid pacts will be required to effect regional coordination and cooperation. In some cases, it may not be possible to plug gaps by modifying operational frameworks or through regional coordination. In that case, these gaps constitute unfilled requirements and risks which must be managed in order to achieve the desired level of capability.

Creating objective levels of capability is central to this concept. It is unrealistic with finite resources to believe that the nation can fund every desired capability against every kind of threat in every place. We can, however, manage risk by prioritizing our list of requirements against threats and vulnerabilities and allocating our resources to the greatest need.

Once we allocate resources at the Federal, State or local level, we need to assure the effective use of those resources. For example, the Responder Knowledge Base provides responders the Authorized Equipment List (AEL) approved by DHS. Much of the equipment on the AEL has not been tested by an independent testing agency. Therefore, first responders are often asked to make purchasing decisions based on manufacturers' claims alone. Given the equipment testing infrastructure available to the Federal government in both DOD and DHS, we should be able to quickly assist first responders in making those critical decisions. Manufacturers could provide equipment to designated testing facilities where they would be tested by existing testing agency and the results of

those tests made available to first responders through the Responder Knowledge Base. This would provide meaningful information on which local governments could better base purchasing decisions. The concept is not a great deal different from what is done by *Consumer Reports* or Underwriters Laboratory. Over time equipment standards will evolve that ensure compatibility and best value. More importantly, only that equipment that is compatible with the operational framework should be on the AEL, and by funding only that equipment and institutionalizing NIMS, the nation will move to a coordinated national operational concept.

In order to enhance preparedness of first responders, it is important to transfer technology already available and needed by the first responder community. Congress has provided limited resources for doing that but there is enough available to develop model programs in various parts of the United States. First Responders in these model programs would develop the techniques and procedures to use this technology properly. The results could then be proliferated across the nation through LLIS and RKB. This concept envisions model programs in a large metropolitan area, a medium-size city and a smaller community. Spiral development could be used to embed technology in each of the communities in order to determine the technology required and the best techniques and procedures for using that technology. This system would assure the nation that the technology provided is the technology required.

Much has been done; much remains to be done.

I believe the National Preparedness Goal is a key element of the National System. That goal should help identify national priorities, provide guidance on desired levels of national capabilities, as well as performance objectives and a system of measurement for first responders to use against their bottom up assessment. The Goal, scheduled to be published this March, should tie the system together. One way of looking at this systemic approach to enhancing preparedness is depicted on the chart at Appendix A.

While the establishment of a National Preparedness System is daunting, it is not insurmountable. Much has already been done and the pieces appear to be coming together nicely. The chore is not technologically complex, but it does represent a cultural challenge. In order to change the disparate organizational cultures involved, we as a nation must understand the threat we face. We must understand the risk of failing to prepare. Once the American people understand the risk, there is no doubt that they will do the right thing.

Once again, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to share my views with you.

## APPENDIX A

